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which they all entertained. However, the time for doing so had now passed by, and he could only once more express his regret that he was unable to be present on that occasion.

The Papers read were—

1. *Report on the Brazilian Province of the Paraná.* By the Hon. H. P. VEREKER, H.B.M. Consul at Rio Grande do Sul.

THE Brazilian province of the Paraná is thinly peopled, and has been much neglected. It lies between the Atlantic and the province of Uruguay, and between the S. latitudes 22° and 28° . Its surface rises gradually, in well-wooded and well-watered districts, from the seaboard to the heights of the Serra do Mar and the hills of St. Paul. Thence to the westward lies a large diversified plain, containing the capital, Curityba, and other towns, the furthest of which is Guarapuava, at the extreme limits of civilization. Beyond are immense unexplored forests, reaching to the confines of the province on the Paraná and Uruguay. They are intersected by numerous rivers, which are, for the most part, little known, but will doubtless afford routes for future commerce. As yet there are no ports upon any of them. The only considerable harbour on the Atlantic is Paranagua, which has never been regularly surveyed. It is an immense sheet of water, apparently deep and navigable throughout.

A description is given in the paper of nine small colonies that are established in different parts of the country. One of the most interesting and the most fertile is that of South Theresa, founded in 1847 by the late Dr. Faivre, a Frenchman, and consisting in 1850 of 180 Brazilians and 20 French. In addition to these are many small settlements of Germans and others, and their number is on the increase.

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2. *A Sketch of Nicaragua.* By GERALD RAOUL PERRY, Esq., H.B.M. Vice-Consul for that State.

NICARAGUA, one of the five sovereign states of Central America, is about half the area of Great Britain, but contains a population of only a quarter of a million, of whom nearly a half reside in towns. The country is mostly a dead level, covered with perennial forest, growing on a soil of apparently extreme fertility. Its climate has two marked seasons—the wet and the dry—of which the former is called the winter, on account of its chilliness, though the sun is at that time vertical. The whole territory is eminently volcanic, such hills as there are being either active or extinct volcanoes. The chief exports of Nicaragua are hides (about 50,000 annually) and various woods. One-half of its population are pure Indians, and the rest, excepting very few pure Spaniards, are of intermixed races.

Nearly the whole are Roman Catholics and speak Spanish. They are exceedingly illiterate; even the Chief Justice doubted whether or no London was a town in England. Nicaragua has been chiefly famous for its civil wars. Its Government—as those in the four neighbouring Central American republics—consists of a President, elected for four years, and a Senate, and a House of Representatives.

3. *Proposed Transit-Route across Central America, from a new Harbour in Nicaragua.* By COMMANDER BEDFORD PIM, R.N., F.R.G.S.

THE author was stationed in H.M.S. *Gorgon*, on the Atlantic seaboard of America, from 1859 to 1861, having surveyed the Pacific coasts of the same isthmus on a previous occasion. He argues from the history, the politics, and the geography of Central America, that no line of transit can promise greater advantages than one through Nicaragua. Hitherto, Greytown has been the only known harbour on its Atlantic coast. Greytown was the terminus of the Nicaraguan river and lake route, which formerly competed with the Panama transit; but at the present moment, as established by the author's survey, there are only 11 feet of water above its bar, and the entire harbour is rapidly silting up, so that in a few years it will be transformed into an enclosed lagoon, like that of Blewfields.

This difficulty of access to Nicaragua is cleared away by Commander Pim's discovery of an excellent bay immediately to the south of Monkey Point, previously unknown as a harbour, and even unnamed. He calls it "Gorgon Bay," and proposes it as the terminus of a railway, to abut on Lake Nicaragua, at San Miguelito, whence passengers would cross the lake by steamers (two of which, belonging to the old abandoned enterprise, are now lying there in good order), and would finally pass through a shallow canal, to be dug either to San Juan del Sur, or to Salinas Bay, across the neck of land, 12 miles broad, which separates the Lake Nicaragua from the Pacific.

As a commencement to this undertaking, Commander Pim has bought the entire shore of Gorgon Bay, and some small islands opposite, from the King of Mosquito, whom he describes as an intelligent Indian, of ancient descent, well-educated at Jamaica, and speaking English as his own language.

Commander Pim travelled by canoe up the river San Juan and across the lake of Nicaragua to Managua, to communicate with Sir C. Wyke, the British Plenipotentiary, and, both going and returning, he visited San Miguelito. He was unable to make more than a cursory survey of its harbour, owing to a fear of exciting suspicion among the natives, but he satisfied himself of its fitness